

from its home area by this wind and may have been returning. The species is recorded annually at both sites. In conclusion, I would be interested to hear if anyone else has recorded natural movements of marked moths over such distances in the British countryside. — PAUL WARING, Park Farm House, Banbury Road, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1AH.

**ACHETA DOMESTICUS L. (THE HOUSE CRICKET) LIVING OUTDOORS IN SURREY.** — A colony of house crickets became established around this suburban road in east Surrey during the long hot summer of 1983. Now rarely found in houses, it normally survives outside only on rubbish tips warmed by rotting material.

The insects were first noticed by their call, a short trill repeated over and over again. They started calling just before dusk and continued long into the night. The call was heard almost every night from 29th July to 9th September, when the onset of cold windy weather brought an end to the colony.

The number of calling males built up slowly to a maximum of ten in early September. Most were calling from cracks that had developed between the lawns and the paving stones during the long dry spell. Others were in cracks in the road surface or in the bare soil. The sounds came from the same positions each night. Calling males could be observed with a torch but only after a very stealthy approach. The raised position of the fore-wings while stridulating was very evident. The ones in the road cracks stopped calling when a car or a pedestrian passed. On one occasion a female was seen in a crack behind a paving stone, flexing its ovipositor raised above the folded hind-wings.

The origin of this colony of these normally indoor creatures is unknown. None of the local residents has admitted to having crickets on the hearth. There is a laundry a quarter-mile away and the terminal and other buildings of Gatwick Airport are one mile distant. These are both possible sources. — R. D. HAWKINS, 30D Meadowcroft Close, Horley, Surrey RH6 9EL.

**BOUNTY ON WITTERSHAM WHITES.** — Down at Wittersham on the Isle of Oxney bounty has been paid out on the heads of cabbage whites ever since anyone can remember. Wittersham lies on the Sussex-Kent border on the edge of the fertile pastures of Romney Marsh. It is in a good position to receive migrants since Dungeness is only ten miles away. No doubt plenty of cabbage crops were grown and hordes of defoliating caterpillars were seen.

Today the Wittersham Horticultural Society still carry a class in the children's section: '*Class 60 For the most Cabbage White Butterflies mounted on cards*'. Class 59 is '*For the most Queen Wasps pinned on cardboard mounts*.' First prize for each class in 1983 was 20p; 15p for second and 10p for third. Boys and girls under 16 who obtain the most points in the various classes are awarded a bonus of 50p.

Obtaining details about the number of cabbage whites collected in the past has proved relatively unsuccessful. One might have expected records of thousands of whites collected pre-1955 before the granulosus virus struck the cabbage whites and before the 1940s before organic insecticides were widely used. Marcia Ascott of Wittersham very generously went through the parish magazines from 1885 to the present day. Only names of recipients are given without numbers collected. It would seem that cabbage whites are becoming rare in Wittersham now. A note in the 1968 accounts relate that '*only the lack of the familiar cards of cabbage butterflies and queen wasps showed the combined effects of wet weather and the widespread use of insecticides.*' It is of interest that the prize was not awarded in 1971.

Talking to a few locals has revealed some details of technique. Hand-made butterfly swats were made out of about three faggots which were bound together. Some people recall catching about 300-400 whites which seemed to be an average figure. One person remembered catching nearly 1000 one year. The whites used to be presented in boxes or in tins with the number recorded on the outside. Now they are pinned on cards like the queen wasps. Many children in the village used to collect the cabbage whites for the annual show. For most of them it was the only way they could come by a few pennies. Other classes were in handwriting, painting and sewing.

This method of biological control of whites and wasps was probably effective in checking some infestations and for using up the unbounding energies of children in the parish. It is intriguing that this tradition is still maintained by the Horticultural Show. A similar sort of bounty was paid out by churchwardens for sparrows elsewhere in Kent at Petham, near Canterbury (*Country Life* 1973 June 21st). The annual average catch was about 600 birds, with a maximum of 929 in 1839. The bounty was a farthing for young and a halfpenny for older sparrows. — JOHN FELTWELL, Henley Down, Catsfield, East Sussex.

BUCCULATRIX THORACELLA (THUNBERG) (LEP.: LYONETIIDAE). — The past decade has seen a remarkable change in the distribution and abundance of this species. It is a colourful and well-marked moth and the larval feeding is conspicuous, making it unlikely that it was formerly overlooked.

In the past it was considered rather a scarce woodland species with a mainly western distribution. Meyrick gives "Gloucester to Derby and Lancashire"; outside this area there were isolated records from Kent and Sussex reported in their respective Victoria County Histories. The only foodplant was small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*).

In the 1970s I began to find it in local plenty in more easterly counties such as Northamptonshire and Essex, where it occurred in relics of ancient woodland in which small-leaved lime had persisted.